## In the Claims:

Please add new claim 24 as follows:

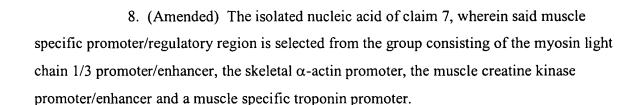


24. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said expressed Insulin-like Growth Factor I is a translation product of an alternatively processed RNA.

Please amend claims 1, 7, 8, and 9, as set forth below. A "marked-up" copy of the claims indicating the changes is attached hereto.



- 1. (Amended) A method of increasing vertebrate muscle mass and muscle strength, said method comprising administering a muscle enhancing dose of an isolated nucleic acid encoding Insulin-like Growth Factor I (IGF-I) intramuscularly into a vertebrate, wherein said isolated nucleic acid is expressed in muscle cells, thereby increasing said muscle mass and said muscle strength in said vertebrate.
- 7. (Amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising a vertebrate Insulin-like Growth Factor I (IGF-1) coding region, operably linked to a muscle specific promoter/regulatory region, wherein said IGF-1 coding region is flanked on the 5' side by an SV40 intron sequence and wherein said IGF-1 coding region is flanked on the 3' end by an SV40 polyadenylation signal sequence.



9. (Amended) The isolated nucleic acid of claim 8, wherein said muscle specific troponin promoter is the fast troponin C promoter/enhancer.